

he found, while walking down a passage, that his corpulence, which after steadily increasing for several years had now become extreme, made it difficult for him to get past Raffaelli, the artist, who happened to be standing there. "It's a torrid nuisance to have such a corporation," said Zola, apologising to Raffaelli, whom he had involuntarily squeezed. "But it's easily got rid of," the other answered. "If you wish to reduce your figure, you will merely have to cease drinking while you eat." And forthwith he gave some particulars concerning a form of treatment,¹ which he himself had followed, for ridding oneself of obesity. On the following morning Zola told his wife of it, but she laughed at him, declaring there was no sense in such a story. Besides, she said, he would never be able to abstain from drinking while he ate. Zola contended the contrary, and at last both husband and wife became impatient, and without exactly quarrelling, had, as the saying goes, "a few words together." But at last the morning roll and coffee, to which the first breakfast is usually limited in Paris, was served, and Zola thereupon took up his roll and began to eat. As for the coffee, in spite of all his wife's expostulations, he would not touch it; and for three months he persevered with this new treatment, drinking very sparingly and never at meals.

Moreover, after
a week or two he eschewed bread altogether.
One Sunday
in March (1888) when he arrived at M.
Charpentier's house
to dine there, Goncourt, who was present, could
scarcely
recognise him. He had lost over thirty pounds
in weight,

which he had afterwards turned into a novel, "Madeleine
Fe"rat" (see *ante*,
pp. 99 and 107) was produced with indifferent success at
the Theatre Libre
in 1889 —first performance, May 2.

¹ The writer believes it is called the Schveninger cure.